

Catharine Walsh to Henry James, [18 December 1869], from [Rome]

ALS Houghton, bMS Am 1095 (53)

1 Saturday evening

2

3 Such a day of delight as we have had and made so happy by the receipt of your letter.

4 The day has been glorious, and we have been on the Campagna throughout the whole of

5 it, and it never looked so lovely before—We went this afternoon where I am sure you

6 have not been or you would have told us of it,—to new excavations within ten years on

7 the Via Latina. Tombs of the family of Valerius. The frescoes are in a perfect state of

8 preservation and date from 160. You will see them when you return. May you have had

9 half as pleasant a day; and may to-morrow shine as brightly. How the bay of Naples

10 must have looked to-day!!—And now—for what I took up my pen for to tell you—that I

11 have written to you twice since you left, and that probably two letters await you at the

12 Amérique. I am glad you are well off at the Grande Bretagne, 13 years ago it was

13 admirable, and I have the pleasant reminiscences of it. Your account of the Kings is not

14 inspiring.—just after the old fashion—using those whom they can get hold of to the

15 utmost. It is in the nature, and not being recognized—can't be helped—but it is not

16 handsome. To our great delight we have just heard that Oranges as sweet as sugar are to

17 be found in Naples. François says a lady's maid in the hotel just from there gave him one

18 as sweet as sugar—do find them. The figs I spoke of are Smyrna figs—look out for

19 them.

20 The letters at the Amérique had some little home news—one enclosed part of a letter
21 from L. Gourlay, giving wind of Howard. He is north with his family. get the letter for I
22 foget particulars. I do hope this weather will make you enjoy Naples—for it is a very
23 enjoyable place—ever your loving tante

24 C. W—

25 I am so glad to hear from you.

Notes

[18 December 1869] • The date assigned this letter is based on Catharine Walsh and her party being in Rome while Henry James was in Naples, which was from roughly 11 December to 22 December 1869 (see his letter of 21, 23 December [1869], from Naples, to his mother); the 11th and the 18th were the only Saturdays during this time, and the letter is clearly written later than sooner after James's departure for Naples from Rome

13 your account of the Kings • Catharine Walsh's and Mary Walsh James's first cousin, Charlotte Elizabeth Sleight Matthews, married Clarence W. King, a Canton, China merchant. They had three children: William Vernon, who was killed in the Civil War, Annie, and Arthur. During the war, Charlotte King's sympathies strongly favored the Southern cause, and the defeat of the Confederacy led the Kings to abandon the U. S. for Europe. For Henry James's account of visiting them in Naples see his 21, 23 December [1869] letter to his mother

21 L. Gourlay, giving wind of Howard. • See Mary Walsh James's 8, 9 August [1869] letter to Henry James for more details on Elizabeth (Libby) Gourlay's reporting on Howard James

© This is copyrighted material; reproduction for commercial purposes is not permitted by law except with permission of the copyright owners

To cite this letter, according to MLA style guidelines:

Walsh, Catharine. Letter to Henry James. [18 December 1869]. James Family Papers. Houghton Library.

Harvard University. Cambridge, Mass. Dear Henry James.org Ed. Pierre A. Walker et al. 2005.

Salem State College. *[insert your date of access here]* <http://www.dearhenryjames.org>.